

Message Text

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R 212112Z SEP 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, SY, US

SUBJ: RETURN OF ROMAN MOSAIC TO SYRIA

1. NEWARK MUSEUM SEEKING TO RETURN ROMAN MOSAIC IN ITS POSSESSION, WHICH WAS EXCAVATED FROM SITE AT APAMEA IN SYRIA TO APPROPRIATE SYRIAN AUTHORITIES. MOSAIC WAS STOLEN FROM SYRIAN SITE AND WAS UNWITTINGLY PURCHASED BY NEWARK MUSEUM FROM PRIVATE DEALER IN NEW YORK.

2. IN JUNE AT OUR INSTRUCTION CARDILLI INFORMED DR. BAHNASSI, D/G OF ANTIQUITIES IN DAMASCUS, THAT NEWARK MUSEUM PREPARED TO RETURN MOSAIC TO SARG AUTHORITIES. MOSAIC IS HEAVY (320 POUNDS) AND SHIPPING COSTS WOULD BE HIGH. NEITHER NEWARK MUSEUM NOR ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION ABLE BEAR SHIPPING COSTS. MUSEUM PREPARED TO HAND MOSAIC OVER TO SYRIAN UN MISSION IN NEW YORK, OR TO HAVE IT PACKED AND SHIPPED TO DAMASCUS AT SARG'S EXPENSE. SUGGESTION HAS BEEN MADE THAT IF SARG AUTHORITIES DO NOT WANT TO UNDERTAKE COSTS OF SHIPPING MOSAIC BACK TO SYRIA, MOSAIC COULD BE USED BY SYRIAN UN MISSION AS AN EXHIBIT.

3. EMBASSY SHOULD ASK FONMIN TO INSTRUCT CARDILLI TO TAKE PROBLEM UP WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. CARDILLI SHOULD
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MAKE CLEAR THAT NEWARK MUSEUM, HAVING DISCOVERED ILLEGAL

PROVENANCE OF MOSAIC, IS READY TO MAKE HONORABLE AND GENER-
OUS GESTURE OF TURNING IT BACK TO SYRIA BUT HAS NEITHER

FUNDS NOR OBLIGATION OF ANY SORT TO PAY FOR SHIPMENT. WE
WOULD APPRECIATE CARDILLI'S DETERMINING SARG'S DESIRES RE
DISPOSAL OF MOSAIC. RUSH

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